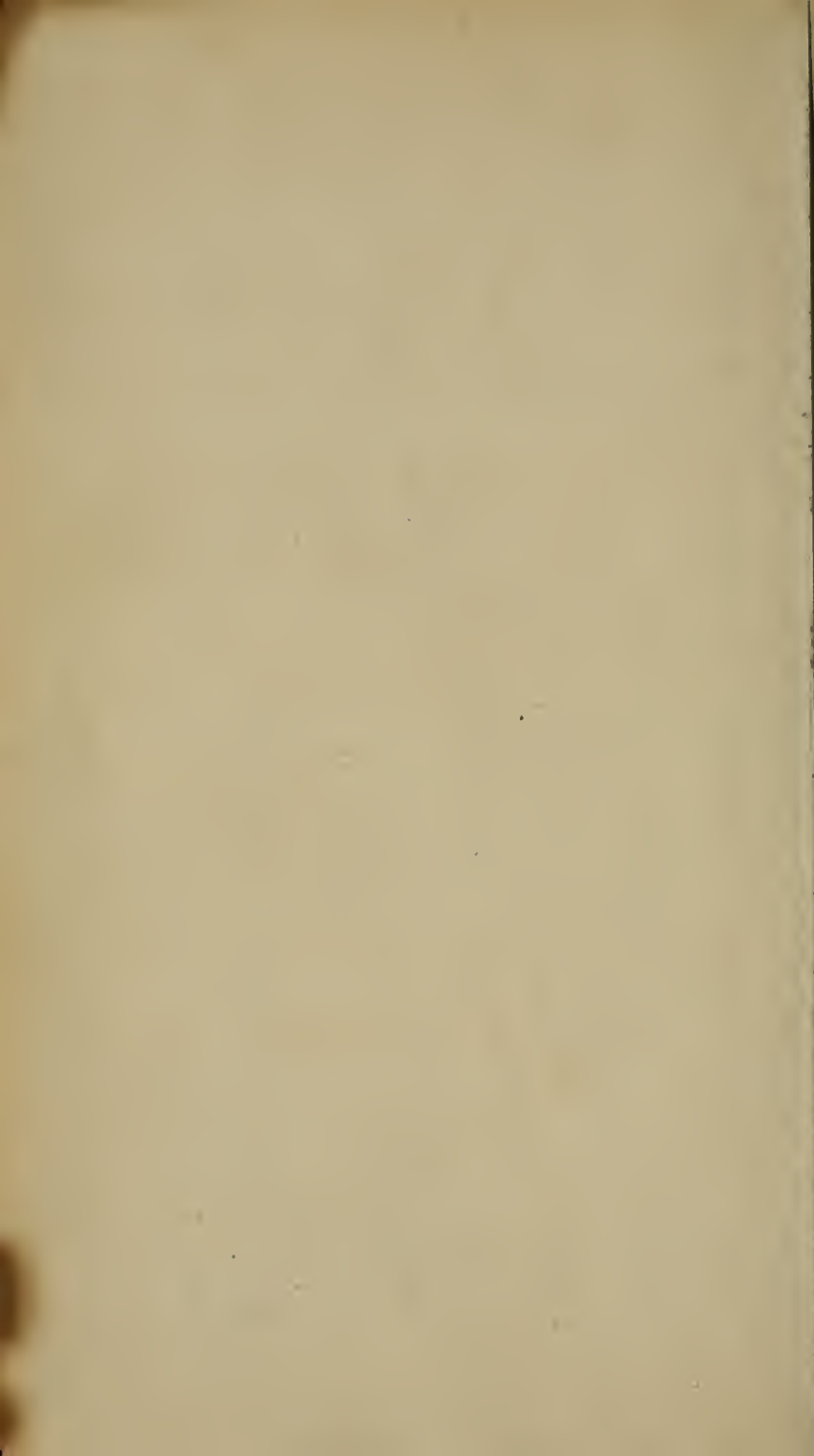


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17
DO ALL TO THE LORD JESUS.

A SERMON.

BY THE

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S E R M O N .

DO ALL TO THE LORD JESUS.

COL. III. 17.

“Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the LORD JESUS, giving thanks to GOD and the FATHER by Him.”

ALL, probably, have felt at times a painful void, after they had been wholly taken up with some work of their calling or active duty. The soul has seemed to come to itself, and found itself empty and exhausted. What it has done, it has, according to its infirmity, done according to the Will of GOD. At least, it does not, on examining itself, find anything, in any marked way, done contrary to the Law and Will of GOD. On the contrary, it has even been employed in His Service : it set out, perhaps, with some brief prayer that it might do it as GOD willed, or that GOD be thereby glorified ; at least, at the outset of the day, it commended all its works to GOD, that they “might be ordered by His Governance to do always that is righteous in His Sight ;” and yet, its work over, all which it has done often seems one great void. It has not, perhaps, laboured in vain ; it has done what was given it to do ; its work may have been for the good of man, or for the Glory of GOD ; and yet, when all is over, and others think perhaps that it has done well, it sinks within itself, unsatisfied with itself, lonely in its inmost self, as though it had been all the while without GOD.

Some of you, my brethren, must doubtless have

known, at times, this state ; how at the first moment, when, after a busy day spent amid employment in duty with others, ye stood alone with GOD, all the past seemed one empty turmoil ; the soul seemed to have been dead, and now to have a faint sickly life : it seemed to have been away from GOD, and the whole day since it last prayed to Him, to have been lost ; one busy emptiness, because GOD was not in it. Where was the evil in this ? where is the remedy ?

The evil is, that we are slow to learn in act what in our inmost souls we know, and in our faith profess, which to doubt were heresy ; that we can do nothing good without GOD. This we know so well, we can confess so truly and heartily, that we often in deeds the more neglect it. We take it for granted that since we know it, we shall act on what we know ; and because we do so take it for granted, we are unwatchful and as certainly forget it. Nothing is done without effort, until it be learnt perfectly, and whether by nature in the things of nature, or by Grace in the things of Grace, has become part of ourselves. And so if we think that, as a matter of course, we shall do what we know, as a matter of course, we do it not. Men confess truly, that without GOD they cannot think one good thought, say one good word, do one good act. They confess that for their bodily life, every function of the body, every breath they breathe, every beating of the heart, they depend upon GOD Alone. "When Thou takest away their breath, they die." And yet they do both in a mechanical way, owning both as truths, yet acting as if nothing were less true. Men think it very unlikely they shall die this day, or that they shall fall into any evil accident, because they have lived so many without any great accidents ; and they take it for granted that their food will nourish them, because it has nourished them heretofore ; or that they will sleep or wake because they have mostly slept and waked soundly. Yet how

could any one be said to depend really upon GOD at all, who should lie down to sleep with a formal prayer to Him to protect him, yet all the while scarcely thinking but that He will without any prayer at all? or who takes his food as a matter of course, perhaps with some formal grace, yet only thinking perhaps of what is pleasant or nourishing, and how to choose what is most nourishing, as though it must, in itself, nourish him, because GOD has given it the power so to do. This were more the way of a heathen, than of one who really believes in the special Providence of GOD.

In like way as to deeds of Grace. It is well, as people's devotions now are, if many who would wish to account themselves Christians, *really* prayed, morning by morning, to GOD, to carry them through the temptations and trials of the day, as really believing that for this they needed the *special* aid of GOD. For what must one think of very many so-called Christians? Will not very many who are now Christians, confess it perhaps of many of their younger years, that if they prayed at all or thought at all, they hoped that they should somehow do right or escape what was very wrong, almost through the very wish and intention of doing it, that it is enough to call upon GOD in some general way, and that then, (they think not how,) things will not be much amiss with them. GOD is indeed more ready to hear than we to pray; but where has He told us that He will hear such prayers as these? It is to be feared that deeds done amid such prayers as these, are deeds of nature, not deeds of Grace; deeds such as a good heathen might have done, many not so good as many heathen deeds, being done with perhaps as little thought of the Grace of CHRIST as those of the very heathen. It will seem a hard word, but which are such deeds most like, the acts of men without GOD, not blasphemers or atheists, yet with as little thought of GOD as even

they, or deeds wrought in CHRIST? Take any of the words of Holy Scripture as to Christian duty or Christian life. "Pray without ceasing: in everything give thanks." "Giving thanks always for all things." "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the LORD." "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the SON of GOD, Who loved me and gave Himself for me." "Whether we live, we live unto the LORD." "We live in the Spirit." "If we be dead with CHRIST." "Whether ye eat, or whether ye drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of GOD." "Thou hast wrought all our deeds in us." "He that doeth good cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought *in GOD*." What words are these! What a light of inward life streams forth through them! what a power of the Spirit! what might of holiness! "deeds wrought *in GOD*," done heartily to the LORD, eating to the Glory of GOD, a life in the Spirit, CHRIST liveth *in me*. How many, were they forced to make the choice, must not rather fear that their works were rather wrought without CHRIST, than dare to claim such words as these.

Or take Christians again in their daily trials. We know how difficult it is not to offend in word, that such an one, the Apostle says, "is a perfect man." Yet people converse together on perilous subjects, public evils, the ills of the Church, the measures of those in authority, their spiritual rulers, controversy, holy things, their neighbours, notorious sins, parties to whom they are opposed or who are opposed to their belief, or persons uncongenial to themselves, or who have vexed them, or done them a spite or an injury: and who, almost, thinks that it must be a great Grace of GOD to speak on those subjects without displeasing Him by pride, or censorious, or unloving, or irreverent thoughts or words? Of how many conversa-

tions, every moment, throughout the Christian world, for how few is any aid of GOD at all asked, in how far fewer is there any abiding thought of GOD, and prayer that He will give good thoughts or keep the tongue from evil words!

It would seem strange to say that most Christians seem to think that in the daily deeds and words of life, they either "*cannot sin*" or they "*must sin*," or that these two "*cannot sin*" and "*must sin*" are one and the same thing. What people do hate is, being in earnest at all, having any strife with themselves, to keep watch over themselves, to refrain from any thing which they wish to do, and so they do not wish to pray for the Grace of GOD, because they do not wish to be at the pains to use it; they shrink from the pain of putting restraint upon themselves; and so they are ready to think that they cannot help themselves, that they *must* fall into these daily sins of infirmity, and so they cast back their own faults upon GOD; or they look upon them, as after all, no such great faults at all, and so they act as though they could not sin. They think they cannot but sin, and so that it is no sin in *them*.

Or take the same man day by day. It requires very little self-knowledge to know that we have, each of us, besetting sins, sins as to which our special trial lies. Yet apart from those who almost think it an excuse that it is their besetting trial, and so, that they must fail, and take their daily sins almost as a matter of course; who, almost, learns from experience, at least in these, at the moment, by some brief prayer to ask for the grace of GOD? The sinful, angry, self-pleasing, self-praising, word, again and again escapes, and the thought of GOD, at best, but follows it.

Such are among the best cases of persons who think that they have religion enough, of whom the world thinks well; of some too, who think even ill of them-

selves, and would desire to remedy the evil, but know not how.

The Apostle gives the remedy: "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the Name of the LORD JESUS, giving thanks to GOD and the FATHER by Him." In the Name of the LORD JESUS, i.e., as one who beareth His Name, in the might of His Name, calling upon His Name, to the Glory of His Great Name, or, in few words, refer all things to Him, receive all from Him. Let Him be the Beginning of all, He the End of all, He the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Beginning from Whom all flows, the End, in Whom we are gathered, the Aim of all we do, the Reward for which we look for all which, through Him, is wrought to Him; He, the Fountain of all Goodness, from Whom all Graces flow, the Ocean to Whom all should flow back, receiving the streams of our thanksgivings, not to be filled by them, but to supply them again to us.

Have Him before thee as the Pattern Whom thou art to copy, the Redeemer in Whom is thy strength, the Master and Friend, Whom thou art to serve and please, thy GOD by Whom thou hast been created and re-created, and Who, in His Infinite Love, is thine Everlasting Reward. Fix thine eye on Him, as thy Help, thy Aim, the Centre of thy being, that He Who hath looked on thee that thou mayest see Him, may rivet thee unto Himself, steady thy unsteadfastness, set His Eye on thee, to guide thee.

Set Him before thee, to do all these acts to Him. But can, one will say, all such little acts be done to Him? were it not almost an indignity to bring such little things in reference to His Great Majesty? One might rather say, Great love shows itself most in little acts. So we ourselves feel it in earthly love. Nothing is too little to be done for one deeply loved. In great acts we may please ourselves, have self-satisfaction, be self-complacent. Nothing but deep, fixed,

love, will do unweariedly, all little things not for its own will, but to please whom it loves. Love has the object of love ever in its eye, its thoughts. It acts spontaneously because it loves; not to show its love, but because it loves and cannot but so act. As the character of the wicked is entire forgetfulness of GOD, "not" to have "GOD in all his thoughts," so "I have set GOD always before me," are the Psalmist's words of Him Who saw no corruption, because He was the Holy One of GOD. Little things are the very instances of acceptable service given by Holy Scripture. It saith not, "Give your bodies to be burned for the Glory of GOD," nor to all, "Sell that thou hast and give alms to the Glory of GOD," but it takes the very least, every-day things. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of GOD." It excepts nothing, "do all;" it instances only the very least things, things which all must do almost every day, what our LORD includes under "daily bread," that so we may stop at nothing short of all, but our whole being, doing, thinking, willing, longing, having, loving, be wrapt up, gathered, concentrated, in the One Will and Good-Pleasure of our GOD.

Does any, again, ask, how can such little things be done to GOD? Do them as thou wouldest do them if thou sawest CHRIST by thee. Do them to the end for which GOD appoints them. Do them with prayer to Him that thou mayest do them aright, that He would sanctify them and thee. He eats and drinks to the Glory of GOD who eats and drinks not for the pleasure of the body, but that he may have strength to do the works of his calling, in the state of life to which GOD has called him,—who giveth GOD thanks. He sleeps to the glory of GOD who lieth down to rest in CHRIST, hoping to wake also with thoughts of CHRIST, to labour to His Honour and Service. He drinks wine or strong drink to the Glory of GOD who takes it as S. Paul exhorts S. Ti-

mothy, with thankfulness, as medicine for his often infirmities. He beholds nature, sea, sky, light, moon, in their beauty, who through the things which are seen glorifies the Creator, the Giver of all, and joins in that many-voiced hymn of praise, "wherewith all Thy Works praise Thee, O GOD." He does his daily task, reaps, or feeds cattle, or ploughs, or studies, to the Glory of GOD, who plies it under the Eye of GOD, and doth things or doth them not, as and how he thinks GOD would have them done or left undone. She sweeps a room to the Glory of GOD, who does it with cheerful heart as it should be, because GOD wills it; and prays in secret, or thinks with what Great Love Eternal Wisdom swept the house diligently, until she found that piece of silver, even ourselves, who once bore the Image of GOD. He repents to the Glory of GOD, who, owning himself vile and defiled, gives Glory to GOD, and wishes, for love of Him, all undone which was ever done against His Glory and His Will. He loves to the Glory of GOD, who loves GOD above all things and all besides in and for Him, and as He wills, and nothing out of Him. In the words of an ancient Bishop of the Church * on the words of S. Paul, "When thou sittest to table, pray: when thou eatest bread, give thanks: when thou drinkest wine, remember Him Who gave it thee to make thee of a cheerful heart, and a comfort of thine infirmities. When thou dost on thy raiment, give thanks to the Good Giver. Dost thou look up to heaven, and the beauty of the stars, bow thyself before GOD, and worship Him Who in Wisdom made them all. In like way, at sunrise or sunset, in watch or in sleep, give thanks to GOD, Who created and ordered all these things for thy benefit, that thou mayest own, love, praise the Creator."

* S. Basil, Hom. in S. Julitt. Mart.

But, again, one will ask, how can I do both at once without distraction? How could I do this or that work,—make, for instance, a furrow straight, reap, fish, study, speak, or do anything, and think of God at the same time? Shall I not do my work more carelessly? Be thine own judge. Hast thou ever deeply loved parent, or bride, or husband, or child? Hast thou toiled for them out of love for them? And didst thou find that thou toiledst less diligently, because thou toiledst for one out of thyself? Or hast thou done anything for man's praise, feeling that an eye whose praise thou prizedst was upon thee; that it saw thy every motion, read thy heart through them, gleamed gladly when thou didst well, filled fuller with all hope of thee, quivered with joy at any good in thee? Are these hindrances, or goads and spurs to exert thyself? Hast thou not felt every nerve quickened; a strength, skill, power, glow, daring, quickness, readiness, not thine own, bearing thee on, thou knewest not how, because one thou didst love with a pure love marked thy bearing, and thrilled with thy well-doing? What are we, brethren, where are we? Who is it that is looking upon us, but He, our FATHER, Who loves us with more than mothers' love,—our Friend, our Brother, Who was not ashamed to call us brethren; our Redeemer, our LORD, our GOD, our Everlasting Joy? Who but He Who for us came down from heaven, for us suffered hunger, thirst, weariness, shame, pain; Who watched, fasted, was, as was read to-day, bound, led away, buffeted, denied, despised; yea, mocked, spit upon, racked upon the Cross, pierced with thorns and nails, for Love of us? He it is Who rejoiceth in His faithful servants, fighteth and conquereth in them, as well in their daily strife as in the Martyr's death; He is present, not to look on only, but to aid,—to give the victory which He crowneth; yea, in us, His members, as our Head, to overcome the world, as for us He overcame

it ; in us to receive the crown of glory which He bestoweth ; as for us He wore the crown of thorns, the sins with which we crowned Him. He it is Who looketh on our daily conquest over self ; He it is Who checks in us each rude ungentle word, by His sweet calming Spirit ; He upholds our faintness, supports us when faltering, guides us by His Eye, melts our coldness with His look of love, rejoiceth when in us He seeth of the travail of His Soul. And shall, then, such Love not quicken us to do all things better ? Does it not give us strength in self-denial to take up our cross after JESUS ? Is it not gladness in almsgiving to give to JESUS ? Does it not cast a holy reverence around a sick room, that in it we minister to JESUS ? Is it not sweet in teaching children that in them we receive JESUS ? Is it not victory over Satan to do anything in the "Name of JESUS," at which devils tremble, hell quakes, Cherubim and Seraphim bow in adoring love, His redeemed thrill with loving amazement, that He, being All-Good, so loved us, being all evil ? No ! light is shed all around thee, and thou seest all things in the light ; without the light thou couldest not see them ; thou seest the light with them, sometimes filling them, gladdening them, sparkling in them, reflected by them ; from it they have their very glory, and gladness, and beauty, and serenity, and soft, calm, cheering look, wherewith they seem to lift them up in glad joy, to praise Him Who dwelleth in Light Inapproachable. So be sure, when thou hast learnt to see all things in JESUS, they will but become to thee more pure, more innocent, more holy, more Divine, more full of transporting joy. When thou hast learnt to do all things to JESUS, it will but shed pleasure over all dull things, softness over all hard things, peace over all trial, and woe, and suspense ; it will make contradiction sweet, to bear it meekly with JESUS ; poverty honourable, to be poor with JESUS ; it will but glad-

den toil, to labour for JESUS ; and sweet will be repose, which rests safe on the Breast of JESUS : then will life be glad when thou livest to JESUS ; and how sweet death, to die in JESUS ; with Him, and to Him, and in Him, to live for evermore.

What ! shall love and hatred, jealousy, rivalry, revenge, quicken people's understanding, give them new skill, abilities, power, strength ? Shall even passion, for the time, give an angered man a strength not his own, or "fear" (as it is said) "give wings," so that people have been carried on they knew not how or whither, and done what it seemed they could not do ? Shall people, even in bodily games, be strung up, their eye be quickened, their feet be swifter, their strength greater, through interest of those who stand by ? And shall it be nothing to the Christian that JESUS is ever looking on, ever watching His soldiers in their battle ?—that His approving Eye, once for thee dimmed in Blood and Death, and parting Agony upon the Cross, now in Divine glory, and beaming with the Love of His Godhead, in every deed of thine done for Him, rests on thee in Good-pleasure and in Love ? What have we Christians to do with doing things for the praise of man, or for a fleeting breath, when we may do them "in the Name of JESUS," for the love of JESUS ?

But, once more, it will be asked, how can we learn this ? It would, indeed, be sweet that JESUS should be, Unseen, our Companion in all we do,—that He should fill our thoughts, not taking away any other needful or happy thought, but, as thou sayest, making them holy, and pure, and calm, and good, and happier far. But we become eager in all we do, our thoughts are taken up with it : we begin the day with some thought of JESUS, and then care follows care, and things of sense take us up, and those around us carry our thoughts away ; and so we are hurried on until the end of the day, and, too late,

at night, we find that we have been living to ourselves, not with JESUS. This is the very state which I spoke of at first, and for which this rule of the Apostle is the remedy; to “do all things in the Name of the LORD JESUS.” But, it is true, to know that we ought to do anything, is not yet to know *how* to do it; nor is even to *know* how it should be done, the same as *having learnt* how to do it, or doing it.

We have to learn divine things also by doing them; and as *ye* know who have ever learnt anything, it is amid many mistakes, and failures, and often forgetfulness, and missing, that we learn; and when we have learnt what we have to do, we are still apt again and again to forget it, when it is to be done. So it is in Divine things. There is no easy toilless path to Heaven. We have, indeed, a Divine Teacher, Who will teach us all things needful for us, if we will hearken. But *we* are full of weakness: and we must not be impatient with ourselves, if we find ourselves “slow of heart” in learning to do what we would. Pray for perseverance; seek to learn daily; examine how far thou hast learnt it, wherein thou hast forgotten, and GOD will day by day teach you more and more. To “do all things in the Name of JESUS” is the lesson of a life; be not angry with yourselves, nor despair of ever learning it, because thou art slow to learn the first few syllables. In Divine things the first steps are the most difficult. GOD proves us by this difficulty, whether our hearts are in earnest with Him or no. These overpast, what seemed difficult becomes smooth, for He Himself smooths it, when He has proved us faithful. Yet it may help some of you, to have a few simple rules to begin this practice.

1. Morning by morning think, for a few moments, of the chief employments of the day, any one thing of greater moment than others, thine own especial trial, any occasions of it which are likely to come that

day, and by one short strong act commend thyself beforehand in all to GOD; offer all thy thoughts, words, and deeds to Him—to be governed, guided, accepted by Him,—through and united with the Cross of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

2. Learn to have some set time or set occasions between the morning and evening, which may remind thee of GOD: for if thou comest again and again into the presence of thy GOD, thou wilt not at other times so readily lose the sense of That Presence. To this end, the Church of old fixed certain hours for prayer, especially those of the Mysteries of our Redemption, the Descent of the HOLY GHOST, or 9,—the Crucifixion, or 12,—our LORD'S Giving up His Spirit and His Atoning Death, or 3,—for hours of prayer. And in these our own days, people, according to their leisure, have taken some few minutes about the same hours, to think of their Redeemer's Love, and pray to Him. It would hinder no work (however busy any might be) to use the LORD'S Prayer in thought of His exceeding Love. These are so many stages to help on the soul through the day in thought of GOD.

3. Choose some great occasions of the day, such as bring with them most trial to thee, on which, above others, to commend thyself to GOD. So others have made use of outward things. The sights which they see, or sounds they hear, recall to them the thought of GOD Whom they do not see; and to this end, in part doubtless, Holy Scripture tells us a spiritual meaning of so many common things—reaping, fishing, sweeping a room, a barren fruit tree, pruning fruit-bearing trees,—that all things may call us to the thought and love of GOD.

4. When thou hast done this at the beginning of any action, seek to do it again and again while it lasts. Thus, having said grace, *i. e.* given thanks at the beginning of taking food, try to do it also now and then while taking it. Give thanks inwardly, not at

thy chief meal only, but at all times that thou takest food. Or if thou knowest any chief temptation to *thee*—as some conversation with others, some trial of temper, pray, not only at the beginning, but as thou canst from time to time in the course of it.

5. Whatever thy most besetting fault is, observe narrowly the occasions of it. The more thou watchest, the more thou wilt see of them. And these will be as so many outguards and sentinels to thee, to set thyself in order, and pray before the enemy comes. Thus, if thy fault be a quick temper, there are mostly some feelings of discomfort before the angry word escapes; pause to pray a brief prayer, and thy anger will have been stilled or lessened.

6. It is good to have some brief words of a Psalm, some thought of prayer, which thou mayest use at any moment of leisure. Ye would often have prayed, had ye known what to pray; while ye have been thinking what to pray, the time was gone.

7. Remind thyself from time to time of the Presence of God. Do not think it a stiff formal way. Thou hast not yet learnt to live in His Presence, like the holy Angels; and until thou hast learnt it, thou must use ways of learning it. God will teach it thee, but not without pains of thine own. It is painful that we should need any help to remind us of Him Who so loves us, Who doth and hath done so great things for us, Who is our All. Yet we are weak, and things of sense take us up, and our only help is to own our weakness, and not slight any remedy. Our first steps must be feeble, and need outward props: hereafter, by the help of His Indwelling Grace, we shall move freely—"walking and leaping, and praising God."

It must be possible, to "do all things to the Glory of God," since Holy Scripture expressly so bids us. Be in earnest, think it possible for *thee*, through the Grace of God, and consider earnestly with thyself how thou mayest do it. This is the Christian's life,

that all things should be filled with thoughts of GOD, all done as He wills, all done to Him. He Who fills Heaven and earth, vouchsafes to accept as done to His Glory whatever is done according to His Will. The meanest work on earth, done fully according to the Will of GOD, is done to His Glory, gives joy to the holy Angels, and is accepted by thy Redeemer and thy GOD, Who gives thee strength to do it. Nay, ye who are poorer have, more than others, a likeness to our LORD's lot on earth. If ye labour with your hands, so did He Who was "a Carpenter;" if ye have spare food, so had He; if ye have poor dwellings, He had not where to lay His Sacred Head; if ye are often wearied, so was He; if ye are little accounted of, so was He. Your outward lot is like His: seek ye, amid that lot, to conform your mind to His; to bear all things, by His Divine Help, with His Patience; to do things one by one, as He wills; to have them sanctified by being united with His; and common-place every-day earthly toils will win you Heavenly Rewards, through His Merits Who purchased for us both Grace and Glory, both the power to do His Will and the will to will it, and the strength to persevere to the end. Toil here not for your families only, not for your daily bread, (although this, too, is right), but because it is the Will of GOD and as He wills, and to please Him, and while in "the sweat of your brows ye eat bread," your daily toils shall be pearls in your heavenly Crown, which He, your Merciful Judge, will give you in that Day, and to all them who love His Appearing; and the pearls of that Crown are no created beauty, but the Beauty of the Grace of GOD, and His Own Glory gleaming in His Saints, and His Divine Love filling them and transporting them with Love and Joy unutterable wherewith it fills them.





